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Mike Lindell's Wacky New Way to Fight Vote Fraud Might Get You Arrested

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The MyPillow guy wants to pilot unmanned aircraft at voting sites. Please do not do that without a lawyer.



Kelly Weill | Published Aug. 17 2023 6:07PM EDT



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

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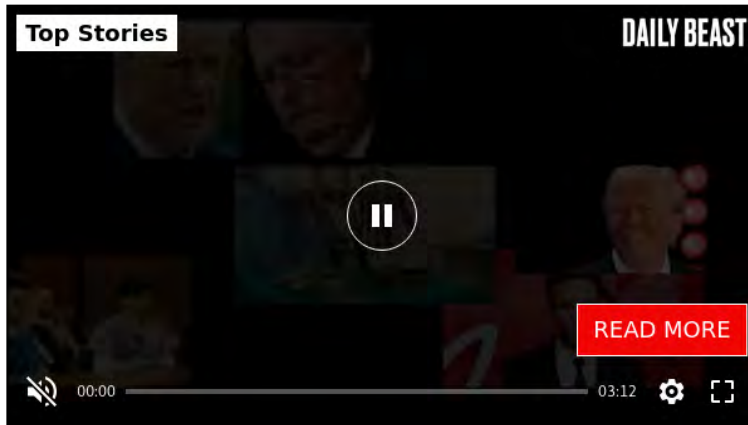
Will Neal



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

MyPillow founder Mike Lindell unveiled his long-hyped plan to catch supposed election thieves red-handed on Thursday—and it may get you arrested in multiple states, municipalities, and federal aviation zones.

Lindell, a linen salesman-turned-conspiracy theorist, remains one of the loudest promoters of election fraud hoaxes. Some of those false claims are at the center of a new indictment against Donald Trump and a suite of associates, who are accused of a criminal conspiracy centered around their attempts to overturn Trump's 2020 presidential loss in Georgia.



Undeterred, Lindell is moving forward with a new scheme for future elections. During a Thursday event, he flew a drone-mounted device into a conference center and described it as a new technology designed to search polling sites for suspicious WiFi.

"This device, as it flew into this building, this wireless monitoring device, it just grabbed all of your cell phones, everybody in this room, every device that's on the internet right now," Lindell told his audience.

He envisioned the device as part of a large, crowd-sourced effort to monitor polling location in real time from an app he developed.

Lindell on Friday maintained that his device his not a drone and that he envisions clerks controlling the equipment.

"The drone doesn't have anything to do with it," he clarified to The Daily Beast. "This is a thing to help our country. It secures our elections. The country clerks are going to have the device...they can see if one of these machines come online and they lied to us. Everyone says they're not online. And I have Frank Social dot com app where everyone in their own neighborhood can watch what's going on. The people voted in a house that eight people voted, only one person lives there—they're going to see all that too."

Lindell is a proponent of an exhaustively debunked conspiracy theory that claims Trump actually won the 2020 election, but that Democrats, China, and voting machine companies conspired to hack voting machines and flip Trump's votes to Biden. This is not true—and two of those voting machine companies

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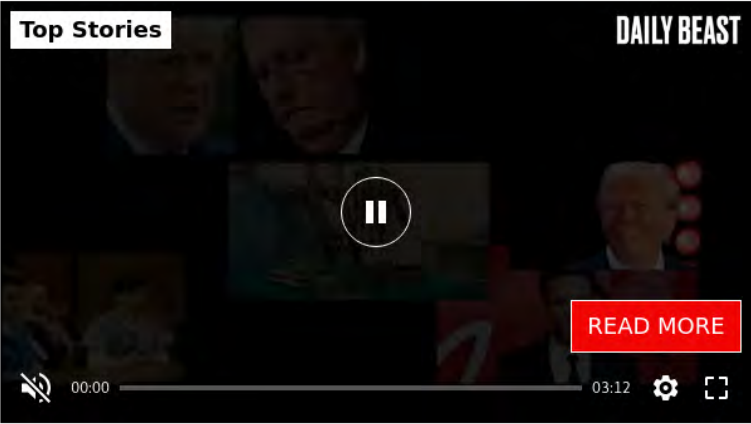
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While hosting a “Cyber Symposium” on supposed election fraud in 2021, Lindell even offered \$5 million to anyone who could disprove his theory. A software forensics expert quickly disproved the theory, and later took Lindell to court for the \$5 million. Lindell is currently trying to appeal the loss in court.



While that legal battle continues, Lindell hosted his new election conference this week, which culminated in the grand reveal of his plan to stop future supposed voting machine hacks.

During the Thursday symposium (called the “Election Crime Bureau”) in Springfield, Missouri, Lindell touted the benefits of his new “wireless monitoring device” (WMD), which he said can scrape data on nearby devices with internet access like phones and computers. If the device is in a polling place, and it sees a new device come online, that could be proof of a Chinese plot to hack the building and toggle a few more votes away from Republicans.





“Lemme tell you, everybody. We now can catch them in a lie, okay?” Lindell told the audience.

Lindell demonstrated this by attaching the WMD onto a loud hobbyist drone, which he flew through the back door of the University Plaza Hotel & Convention Center, where the conference was taking place. (Lindell later clarified to The Daily Beast that you could also walk the WMD into a room.)

It’s not entirely clear whether WMD-armed drones would need to fly inside polling locations, or if they could merely hover outside until their batteries burn out (an average of 20 minutes for high-end drones, [according to Droneblog](#)).

The law takes a dim view of either.

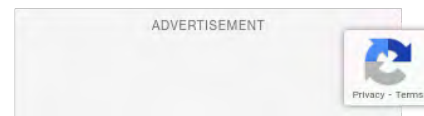
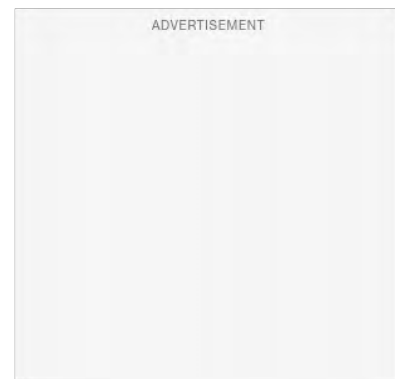
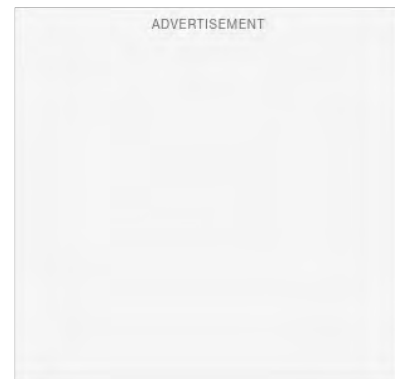
Lindell boasted that his team is working on deploying WMDs for elections in Louisiana, a state that recently updated its criminal trespassing laws to clarify that flying an unauthorized surveillance drone above a building is just as illegal as sending it zooming through the interior.

“For purposes of this Subsection, the phrase ‘enter upon immovable property’ as used in this Subsection, in addition to its common meaning, signification, and connotation, shall include the operation of an unmanned aircraft system as defined by R.S. 14:337 in the air space over immovable property owned by another with the intent to conduct surveillance of the property or of any individual lawfully on the property,” [Louisiana’s very specific trespass code](#) reads.

[Louisiana law also prohibits](#) “the intentional use of an unmanned aircraft system to conduct surveillance of, gather evidence or collect information about, or photographically or electronically record a targeted facility without the prior written consent of the owner of the targeted facility,” which appears to foreclose on Lindell’s unmanned aircraft surveillance plan.



(The head of the Louisiana Advanced Aviation and Drone Advisory Committee was out of office on Thursday and was not available for comment on the legality of drone-mounted WMDs in polling places.)



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Other states and municipalities have their own anti-drone laws. Flying a drone within 15 miles of Washington, D.C.'s inner ring can land you in jail for 90 days. Other cities like New York have their own anti-drone laws on the books, and drones are prohibited within five miles of airports.

On Thursday, Lindell was aware of at least some technology laws. He said he would have demonstrated his WMD on real voting machines, but that he worried he might face legal risk.

"You saw what they did in Michigan, where they went after Matt DePerno and all of them for having a machine," Lindell said.

DePerno, who was Michigan's Republican attorney general nominee in 2022, was not arrested for "having a machine." He and peers are accused of illegally absconding with Michigan voting machines in early 2021, smuggling them to hotels, and dismantling them in a futile search for evidence that Donald Trump actually won the state's presidential election.

"We weren't gonna take that chance," Lindell said. "This is too important to the world."

This story has been updated with clarification from Mike Lindell.

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